

7 determining whether to extend said second closing time based on said extended first closing time; and

extending said second closing time in accordance with said determination.

106. The method of claim 105, wherein said extending said first closing time comprises:

determining whether an overtime trigger condition occurs prior to said first closing time;

and

adding a first overtime interval to said first closing time.

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107. The method of claim 106, wherein said determining comprises:

calculating a first time interval between said extended first closing time and said second closing time; and

determining whether said first time interval is less than a second time interval.

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108. The method of claim 107, wherein said second time interval represents a minimum time interval between said first and second closing times.

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109. The method of claim 107, wherein said first time interval is less than said second time interval, and said extending said second closing time comprises adding a second overtime interval to said second closing time.

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110. The method of claim 109, wherein said first overtime interval is equal to said second overtime interval.

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411. The method of claim ³109, wherein said first overtime interval is different from said second overtime interval.

Sub E3
112. The method of claim 106, wherein said overtime trigger condition is at least one of a group comprising a ranking criterion, a quality criterion and a bid group characteristic.

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113. The method of claim ⁶112, wherein said ranking criterion is at least one of a group comprising a best bid and a predetermined rank from said best bid.

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114. The method of claim ⁶112, wherein said quality criterion is at least one of a group comprising a bid price, a bid price within a predetermined absolute difference from a best bid price, a bid price within a predetermined percentage difference from said best bid price, and a bid from an incumbent potential bidder.

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115. The method of claim ⁶112, wherein said bid group characteristic comprises at least one of a group comprising an increase in frequency of bids, a statistical analysis of bid prices received from a group of potential bidders and a statistical analysis of bid prices received from one potential bidder.

116. The method of claim 105, further comprising:
setting a third closing time for a third lot;
determining whether to extend said third closing time based on said extended second closing time; and

extending said third closing time in accordance with said determination.

117. A machine-readable medium whose contents cause a computer system to control closing times in an online auction, comprising:

setting a first closing time for a first lot and a second closing time for a second lot;

extending said first closing time;

determining whether to extend said second closing time based on said extended first closing time; and

extending said second closing time in accordance with said determination.

118. The machine-readable medium of claim 117, wherein said extending said first closing time comprises:

determining whether an overtime trigger condition occurs prior to said first closing time;

and

adding a first overtime interval to said first closing time.

119. The machine-readable medium of claim 118, wherein said determining comprises:

calculating a first time interval between said extended first closing time and said second closing time; and

determining whether said first time interval is less than a second time interval.

120. The machine-readable medium of claim ¹⁰119, wherein said second time interval represents a minimum time interval between said first and second closing times.

JUN 28 2006 14:39 FR MORGAN LEWIS BUCKTUS 4123883399 TO 8888888888178338 P.07/09

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121. The machine-readable medium of claim 119, wherein said first time interval is less than said second time interval, and said extending said second closing time comprises adding a second overtime interval to said second closing time.

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122. The machine-readable medium of claim ~~121~~, wherein said first overtime interval is equal to said second overtime interval.

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123. The machine-readable medium of claim ~~121~~, wherein said first overtime interval is different from said second overtime interval.

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124. The machine-readable medium of claim 118, wherein said overtime trigger condition is at least one of a group comprising a ranking criterion, a quality criterion and a bid group characteristic.

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125. The machine-readable medium of claim ~~124~~, wherein said ranking criterion is at least one of a group comprising a best bid and a predetermined rank from said best bid.

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126. The machine-readable medium of claim ~~124~~, wherein said quality criterion is at least one of a group comprising a bid price, a bid price within a predetermined absolute difference from a best bid price, a bid price within a predetermined percentage difference from said best bid price, and a bid from an incumbent potential bidder.